news-item captioned "Reforms in tea auction system soon" which appeared in "The Hindu" dated the 18th June, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to deal with the problems faced by the tea industry particularly the small scale sector because of the prevailing low prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. As indicated in the news-item, the Government is seized of the problems being faced by the tea industry, including the small tea growers, in the present situation of prevailing low prices. The main factors contributing to the low prices of tea include, excess supply of tea, low demand from overseas countries, low rate of growth of domestic consumption and the quality of tea.

Besides providing necessary assistance to the tea industry, including small growers, through the developmental schemes being implemented by the Tea Board, Government has also taken other steps for the benefit of the tea industry. These include, promotion of tea consumption in the domestic market through a generic tea promotional campaign highlighting the health aspects of tea, launched in coordination with the tea industry, a quality upgradation programme being implemented through the Tea Board for improving the quality of tea, creating awareness among producers for reducing cost of production, implementation of a medium term export strategy formulated in consultation with international consultants, and assisting tea exporters in their marketing efforts abroad. The primary marketing system of tea has also been studied to look at the need for possible reforms in the tea auction system.

Industries in rural areas

635. PROF. M. M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any specific long-term policy for setting up of new industries in the rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of amount granted and spent by Government for setting up of industries in these areas during the Ninth plan and the details of funds proposed to be allocated in the Tenth plan for the above purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) to (c) There is no scheme for setting up industries exclusively in the rural areas. The Growth Centre Scheme and the Integrated Infrastructure Development (IID) Schemes being implemented by the Government of India are meant for development of infrastructure facilities in identified areas, including rural areas, with a view to attract entrepreneurs to set up industries in these areas. The total expenditure incurred on these schemes during the Ninth plan was Rs. 179.80 crore and the allocation proposed for these schemes for the Tenth Plan is Rs. 105.00 crore. Allocation for the Growth Centre Scheme has been made only for the first year of the Tenth Five Year Plan as its continuation as Centrally Sponsored Scheme thereafter is to be decided by the Planning Commission.

Criteria for compiling infrastructure index

636. SHRI SK. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED:
SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of criteria compiled by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) in infrastructure index; and

(b) the name of the States which fulfilled the criteria?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) and (b) Based on the information provided by the States, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) compiles Relative Index of Infrastructure in respect of seventeen States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The following indicators have been used in the index: